

Claims

1. A method for providing information related to a topic, comprising:
 - specifying a first topic;
 - specifying a second topic;
 - specifying a relationship between the first topic and the second topic;
 - receiving first information;
 - receiving second information;
 - associating the first information with the first topic;
 - associating the second information with the second topic;
 - requesting information associated with the second topic; and
 - receiving, in response to the request for the information associated with the second topic and in response to the specified relationship between the first topic and the second topic, the information associated with the second topic and the information associated with the first topic.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the first topic is one of a company, an industry, an index, or a subject.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the relationship is a unidirectional relationship from the first topic to the second topic.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein the relationship is a unidirectional relationship from the second topic to the first topic.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein the relationship is a bi-directional relationship between the first topic and the second topic.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein the specified relationship is a legal relationship.
7. The method of claim 6 wherein the legal relationship is a parent-subsidary relationship.

8. The method of claim 6 wherein the legal relationship is a licensor-licensee relationship.
9. The method of claim 1 wherein the specified relationship is a business relationship.
10. The method of claim 9 wherein the specified relationship is a customer-supplier relationship.
11. The method of claim 9 wherein the specified relationship is a competitive relationship.
12. The method of claim 9 wherein one of the first topic and the second topic comprises an industry and the other of the first topic and the second topic comprises a company.
13. The method of claim 12 wherein the specified relationship comprises the company producing at least one of products and services associated with the industry.
14. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of specifying a relationship between the first topic and the second topic further comprises providing a description of the relationship between the first topic and the second topic.
15. The method of claim 1 wherein the first information comprises at least one of an electronic message, an email, an instant message, a financial report, a voicemail, a web page, a research report, an electronic document, and a press release.
16. The method of claim 1 wherein the second information comprises at least one of an electronic message, an email, an instant message, a financial report, a voicemail, a web page, a research report, an electronic document, and a press release.
17. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of associating the information to the first topic is initiated by a first user of a first computer.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein the association initiated by the first user can be modified by a second user of a second computer.
19. The method of claim 17 wherein the request for the information associated with the second topic is received from a second user of a second computer.
20. The method of claim 19 wherein the information associated with the first topic is received by the second user based on the specified relationship between the first topic and the second topic.
21. The method of claim 17 wherein the first computer communicates over a network with a server, the server for storing the specified topics and relationships.
22. The method of claim 21 wherein the network is one of the Internet, a wide area network, a local area network, and an intranet.
23. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of specifying a relationship between the first topic and the second topic is initiated by a user of a first computer.
24. The method of claim 23 wherein the relationship specified by the user of a first computer can be modified by a user of a second computer.
25. The method of claim 24 wherein the modifications to the relationship are sent to the user of the first computer.
26. The method of claim 25 wherein the modifications to the relationships are sent to the user of the first computer asynchronously.
27. The method of claim 25 wherein the modifications to the relationships are sent to the user of the first computer upon request of the user of the first computer.

28. A system for presenting information, comprising:
- a topic definition module for defining topics;
 - a relationship definition module for defining a relationship between two of the topics;
 - a receiver for receiving information;
 - an information management module for associating the received information with at least one of the topics;
 - an information retrieval module for retrieving, upon a request for information associated with one of the topics, information associated with the one of the topics and information associated with a second topic that has a defined relationship with the one of the topics; and
 - a display module for presenting the retrieved data.
29. The system of claim 28 wherein the receiver receives one or more of an electronic message, an email, an instant message; a streaming data feed, a voice message, and a web page.
30. The system of claim 28 further comprising a database for storing one or more of the topics, the relationships, the information, and the associations of information with topics.
31. The system of claim 28 further comprising a rules engine for governing the relationships between two of the topics.
32. The system of claim 28 wherein the relationships between topics are one or more of unidirectional from the first topic to the second topic, unidirectional from the second topic to the first topic, and bi-directional between the first and second topic.
33. The system of claim 28 further comprising a messaging module for distributing modifications made to one of the topics, the relationships, and the rules.
34. The system of claim 33 wherein the update module distributes the modifications asynchronously.

35. The system of claim 33 wherein the update module distributes the modifications on demand.
36. The system of claim 28 further comprising a permissions module for enforcing user access privileges to one or more of the topics, the relationships, and the information associated with the topics.
37. A distributed system for storing and retrieving information, comprising:
 at least one client computer, each comprising:
 a topic definition module for defining topics;
 a relationship definition module for defining a relationship between two of the topics;
 one or more computer application extensions for capturing information presented in a computer application;
 an information management module for associating the captured information with at least one of the topics; and
 a communications module for communicating with a central server via a network, the central server for storing the defined topics, the defined relationships, the captured information, and the association of the captured information with topics.
38. The system of claim 37 further comprising a client update module for receiving updated information relating to the topics, the relationships, and rules governing the association of the relationships to the topics.